

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) Rescue vessel for vessels, ~~of the type that delimits~~ comprising:

an elongated basin (12, '26) ~~[[by]]~~ at least 150 m in length and 30 m in width which can be closed to limit to said basin pollution by a vessel in distress protected in the basin, ~~and that comprises~~

a ballast device that makes it possible to alter the vessel's draft by at least 15 m, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~

a hull that comprises two lateral hulls that surround said basin (12, 26) and that delimits at least one upper edge of said basin (12, 26), ~~[[and]]~~ the ballast device ~~operates~~ operating between at least two positions in one of which positions the basin (12, 26) is evacuated and at least the upper edge is found above sea level, and in the other of which positions the basin (12, 26) is full ~~because~~ with an end is of the basin found below ~~the~~ a level of ~~the~~ a keel of a vessel in distress, and

maneuvering means configured to exert a thrust in a direction that is transverse to at least a longitudinal axis of the vessel.

12. (currently amended) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein said basin (12, 26) has a length of at least 250 m and a width of at least 45 m, and the draft alteration can reach at least 20 m.

13. (currently amended) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein the stern comprises a virtually sealed door (18) that is ~~intended~~ configured to close the rear of basin (12) on ~~the~~ an edge that is found below the level of the keel of a vessel in distress.

14. (currently amended) Rescue vessel according to claim 13, wherein the door that can close the rear of basin (12, 26) comprises two flaps that each comprise two parts that are articulated together around a vertical axis ~~that is,~~ ends of the two parts that are distant from the vertical axis are attached to a corresponding vertical side of the rear hull, and vertical axes of the two flaps are designed to work ~~with the vertical axis of the other flap together~~ in a closed position of the door.

15. (currently amended) Rescue vessel according to claim 13, wherein at least one of the ends of ~~the~~ said two articulated parts that are distant from the vertical axis is attached to the corresponding vertical side of the rear hull by a slide that can move horizontally along ~~the~~ an internal side of the rear part of the hull.

16. (currently amended) Rescue vessel according to claim 13, wherein ~~the door that can close the rear of basin (12) comprises a detachable panel (40) that can be ballasted to move from a position that is close to the bottom of the basin to an approximately vertical closing position of the rear of basin (12)~~ the rear part of the bottom comprises a floor and a panel, said panel can be ballasted and can slide by pivoting to close the rear.

17. (previously presented) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein the two port and starboard longitudinal sides (28) of the hull both have a height that is lower by at least 20 m than that of the other two delimited sides at the front and at the rear of the vessel, and their upper edge (32) is virtually rectilinear on the largest part of its length and is provided with a reinforcement.

18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) Process for rescuing vessels in distress with the assistance of a rescue vessel (10, 24) that can be ballasted and that has a basin (12, 26) according to claim 11, wherein it comprises

a first phase of movement of a rescue vessel (10, 24) toward the location of the vessel in distress,

a second phase, executed close to the vessel in distress, of ballasting the rescue vessel (10, 24) such that at least one upper edge of a basin (12, 26) is found below the level of the keel of the vessel in distress, and

a third phase for introducing the vessel in distress into basin (12, 26) by maneuvering to exert a thrust in a direction that is transverse to at least the longitudinal axis of the vessel, to orient the vessel such that its rear part that is opened wide is rotated toward the vessel in distress, and

a fourth phase of putting the upper edge of basin (12, 26) above sea level.

20. (currently amended) Application of a rescue vessel (10, 24) according to claim 11 ~~with~~ to the transport of bulky structures that are selected from among the vessels and parts of vessels, the drilling or production platforms, and the parts of such platforms, and the marine farming modules at sea, including a phase, executed close to said bulky structures, of ballasting said rescue vessel (10, 24) such that at least one upper edge of

basin (12, 26) is found below the level of the lowest part of
said bulky structure.

21. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 13, wherein
at least one rear door has a height of at least 40 m.

22. (new) Rescue vessel according to claim 11, wherein
at least one rear door has a height on the order of 78 m.